

THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN.

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VOL. I.

AFTER some deliberation, we resolved to call our Periodical "THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN." The name, though scriptural, cannot be expected to please all; all, however, may judge of its appropriateness, by briefly advertng to a few of the objects which we have set before us.

The constant aim of the CHRISTIAN FREEMAN will be to free mankind from the slavery of error and of sin.

I. Slavery, in many forms, surrounds us. Ignorance enchains one, superstition another, human authority a third. This man, while boasting of freedom, is the slave of prejudice; his neighbour, while making high claims to independence, is under the servile bondage of sensuality; while another, who professes to be the champion of liberty, exercises tyranny over all his dependants.

Many causes have contributed to keep our unhappy country under the bondage of ignorance. The oppressive power of Anti-Christ has long crushed a chief part of her people; and many of those means which a short sighted worldly policy has adopted for liberating them, have only tended to rivet their chains. While force and craft were employed for making converts, superstition entrenched herself more strongly, obtained both sympathy and strength, from being a victim of persecution, and spread her pestiferous influence farther and more widely around. The multitude of superstitious practices prevailing among many Protestants; their attention to omens—their observance of heathenish customs—their belief in charms—all prove, not only how congenial the spirit of Romanism is to corrupt human nature, but how dangerous and infectious is its contact. The clanking of other chains, however, than those of ignorance, is in our ears. Does this wild liberalism enjoy the liberty of which it boasts? Far from it. Oft times the most dangerous of all privileges is, "to have our own desire." That is not liberty but licentiousness, which flings itself free from moral obligation. It is a strange liberty of conscience, to

have no conscience at all. A man, it is true, has the power of setting all law, human and divine, at defiance; he may, if he please, think blasphemy and wickedness of every name; and, if he is not guilty of any overt act of violence against the community, no human laws have power over him; but to say, that in such diabolical wickedness, he is exercising any right of conscience, is grossly to pervert the very meaning of terms.

Many struggle to accommodate their belief to their practice, getting rid of doctrines which burden or alarm them; but do they thus make any approach towards true liberty? Not at all. The liberty of sinning, without reproach from conscience, is a very grievous bondage; and the attempt at removing from God's revelation every thing contrary to depraved feeling and sensual wishes, is a lunatic and destructive experiment. Vanity or pride, or open practical wickedness, lies at the foundation of much heresy. It is mere mockery to talk of "fearless, free inquiry," where attachment to system, and preconceived notions close up the avenues to conviction; where the pride of human reason refuses to bend to the authority of God; where, before consulting the eternal standard of *truth*, resolutions have been formed, respecting what shall, and what shall not be received; or where a resolute attachment to vice meets, in hostile array at the very door, that truth which would dislodge it.

Man's proud heart refuses to receive, as an act of mercy alone, a salvation without money and without price; man's proud reason rebels against truth, unattainable by himself, and to be received in humility, as a revelation from God; man's depraved spirit is enmity against truth, which teaches, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, he should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world.

It is impossible to enjoy the liberty with which God makes his people free, while under the influence of error. Error debases and vitiates the heart, and flows forth in unnumbered channels over the whole character. To maintain that sincerity in error can be acceptable to God, or that falsehood can produce "the peaceable fruit of righteousness," is to manifest ignorance, not only of the sources of human action, but of the very nature of the human mind.

II. The slavery of immorality is more obvious than that of error, but both acknowledge Satan as master, and a hard master he is. "He that committeth sin is of the Devil," and death is his wages. Every day and every hour he is earning his wages, and most assuredly they shall be paid. Sin binds its victim with a sore bondage during life; at death, it shuts

him up in a hopeless grave, and fixes his unchangeable state through eternity, in the prison house of darkness, and torment, and despair. Cast your eyes on the besotted debauchee, whom ignorance has misnamed a man of pleasure—he gave loose reins to his appetites; “whatsoever his eyes desired, he kept not from them; he withheld not his heart from any joy.” As his soul was passing into forgetfulness, under the intoxicating draught, and his voice rose loud in the shout of revelry, he seemed to enjoy most enlarged liberty. Yet, in all this, he was only earning his wages, under a master whose heart never knew pity. A part of his wages have been already paid. Look to his debilitated frame; examine the state of his mind. Is he contented? Ah, no. Is he happy? Not at all. He can find forgetfulness for a season—he can find maddening excitement—he can find a short lived sensual gratification—but happiness he cannot find; a momentary smile may play on the face, and a loud vacant laugh may burst from the lips, but there is coldness and deadness within. “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” To be chained at the oar for life is a hard lot; and that, indeed, is a cruel slavery, though no spiritual bondage were connected with it, which compels females, even in the most interesting period of female life, to work in chains, on the public streets; but what is either, in comparison with sinful habit, which enslaves both body and soul, enslaves in time, enslaves in eternity. The poor black slave, while treated by his brother man, worse than the beast of the field, may, through faith, be a child of God; and, when the kind hand of death has released him from his hard bondage, he may mount up on angel’s wings to the enjoyment of eternal liberty. Not so the slave of sin. Slavery is within him—it is debasing him—it is rendering him unfit for liberty—it is preparing him for eternal bondage, with those, who are “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.” He hates the light, and to him the presence of the fountain of light would be hell; wickedness is sowing thickly in his inmost constitution the seeds of endless torment, so that he only requires to be set completely *alone* with God, to stir up within him intolerable misery. Intolerable bondage must be the portion of a soul opposed in every constituent of its character to a God of purity, yet held for ever under his angry gaze, and pressed down with increasing weight, through eternity, by a body of corruption, full of the sins of its youth, which lay down with it in the dust.

What heavy sighs are these, borne to our ear on every gale? They are heaved by prisoners taken in war, shut up by ambition in the dreary dungeon; they have escaped from the cell of the captive patriot, visiting, in imagination, the scenes of happy childhood, the home of liberty, and land of his father's grave. They come, mingled with groans from the East, where dying pilgrims, the victims of British avarice,* breathe their last on their road to Juggernaut, or under the wheels of his car;—they come from the West, where men, wearing the name of Christ, traffic in human blood, with savage scourging mangle the flesh of naked females, and punish the poor negro slave for praying to his God;—they come from fathers, torn by slave-holders from their own children, and husbands from their own wives;—they come from husbands, whose wives have been violated before their eyes, by libidinous slave-drivers, and who, though groaning in their inmost spirit, dare not move a tongue;—they come on every mourning wind, from servants ground under tyrannical masters,—subjects oppressed by tyrannical governments,—children foully treated by savage parents,—and wives dragging to untimely graves a life of wretchedness, under the brutality of husbands, sworn to protect and cherish them, and to whom their young hearts gave their earliest, fondest love.

What a field of labour for THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN is here! Oh, how should our hearts burn for the honour of being used as instruments in bursting the bands of a single captive among all these! In such a glorious enterprise, we would go forth in His spirit who came “to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”

III. What is that spirit?—what are the means of breaking every yoke which he used, and which he commands his servants to employ? The disciples of Jesus were poor Jews, despised by the rest of the world, and persecuted by their own brethren; they wielded no weapons of war, they were clothed with no political authority, they stooped to no flattery, they exercised no priestly domination; and yet superstition, and barbarism, and idolatry melted away before them, the proud became humble, the profligate were reclaimed, the avaricious overflowed with generous liberality, and, in a very few years, whole kingdoms

* The British East India Company employ agents for propagating Idolatry, that thus their revenue may be increased by the taxes paid by pilgrims, for liberty to perform idolatrous and bloody superstitions.

were freed from idolatries which had debased and enslaved them for ages. What was the mighty instrument of so extensive and blessed reformation? Were we to judge, by the history of the Church in many ages of sorrow and darkness now gone by, we would give a very erroneous answer. *Force* is the great instrument which man employs for effecting his purposes, and, when that fails, he has recourse to *craft*. So long as the term Christian continued to be of the same import with "saint" and "brother," so long as the followers of Jesus were despised and persecuted, without authority or political influence, the weapons of their warfare were not carnal; but so soon as the profession of the religion of the cross became a passport to places of power and profit, so soon as worldly policy mingled its corrupting influence with the government of the kingdom, which is not of this world, pomp began to hang out her lures to vanity;—place and profit to tempt avarice;—human authority to supersede the commandments of God; and fraud and violence to force the acceptance of a creed and an attention to outward forms.

Amidst the arrogant pretensions of him "who opposeth and exalteth" himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, and the rage of wars fomented by ambitious princes and ecclesiastics, under the semblance of piety, the world seemed to have forgotten, for a time, that religion has its place in the heart, and that, however human authority may awe, or human power subdue, yet that still the immortal Spirit, in its opinions and its belief, is high and far above the efforts of the despot, and that, though the dungeon may confine, and iron chains bind the body, yet that the spiritual stream of thought runs full and free as ever. Though experience soon proved that persecution never made a single genuine convert, and that the opinions of the martyr, instead of being consumed at the stake with him, seemed rather to be scattered with his ashes, wherever the *heretical* winds carried them; yet, long after the dungeons and racks of the "*Holy*" Inquisition ceased to terrify the nations, and the proud bishop attempted in vain to purchase a rope for binding the martyr to his stake—long after the light of Reformation had banished all relish for the thumb-screw and *auto-da-fe*, the same fire which kindled the fagots around the victim of persecution, continued to burn in the heart of spiritual tyranny, and the same ignorance of the spirit of christianity still continued, and to this hour it does continue, to prompt many to depend for the support of re-

ligion upon the arm of flesh, and for its propagation on human authority and human power.

That christianity abhors all such means, and that such means never can be, nor ought to be successful, has been abundantly confirmed by the history of the church. So long as the disciples of Jesus trod in the footsteps of their Master, using the weapons which he put into their hands, and none other, they were "mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds." To north and south, and east and west, their heavenly doctrines spread; and the bonds of ignorance and immorality burst, like ropes of sand, before them; but, so soon as religion became a mere engine of state, and man's authority, and man's power, took place of the authority and power of God—that moment a disastrous eclipse came over the glory of christianity; idolatry and superstition, and infidelity rose over her in giant strength; and, though hooded and cowed bigotry shut herself up in cells, under pretence of piety; and the sword of the cross-bearer went forth to drink the blood of those who refused to adopt a geographical name; and empty pomp, and idle ceremony mocked heaven with the semblance of worship; yet true christianity fled far from such scenes, to take up her peaceful abode in the society of those, who, with the Bible as their guide, worshipped that God who is a spirit, in spirit and truth, and evidenced the sincerity of their love to their Maker, by doing "good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

IV. The only instrument of conversion from error and sin, which christianity acknowledges is, **THE TRUTH**. The evil against which she has to contend is boundless, and determined and desperate are the fraud and violence which she has to encounter; yet to all this, in the last as well as the first onset, he opposes no other weapon than **TRUTH**. This truth is not founded, however, on man's authority, nor maintained by man's reasoning, but revealed from God, received on the faith of God's testimony, and brought home to the heart in "demonstration of the spirit and of power." The weapons of christian warfare are all found in the oracles of God; and the object of the **CHRISTIAN FREEMAN** will be to state, and prove, and press home on the heart that truth which alone can give heavenly illumination to the understanding, and sanctity to the soul.

God has been pleased graciously to adapt to human nature, the means of human reformation. He that "spake in time

past, unto the fathers, by the prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son." The messengers whom our Father in heaven has sent to us, are men of like passions with ourselves; and when His own Son came, to bring life and immortality to light, he came as the highest evidence of love, as the personification of love; and now, made perfect, through sufferings in our common humanity, he has, in heaven, a human heart, and a fellow feeling for our infirmities. As imitators, therefore, of a God of love, from whom truth comes, as an emanation, we would speak the truth in love, we would present the truth of God's word, as God himself has presented it—clothed with every attraction calculated to win the heart; we would foster in our own bosoms the genial warmth of love, we would attract toward us the love of others; and we would bind, with cords of love, all within the reach of our influence.

It has long been a subject of deep regret to us, not only that there exist so many divisions and jealousies among the friends of Jesus, but that there has been, in preaching and religious discussion, so much of the angry spirit and bitter expression of worldly strife. By God's blessing, it shall be our constant aim to heal the breaches of Zion. Educated as we have been, in the "straitest sect of our religion," none who know us will be much afraid of our being carried away by latitudinarianism; but we firmly resolve, in God's strength, to use every exertion for the promotion of peace, for diffusing, even over the keenest controversy, a spirit of christian mildness, and for promoting more intimate acquaintance and more benevolent intercourse among all "them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

It is much to be regretted that, both from the pulpit and the press, truth has been issued with so much coldness and systematized sternness. God has not presented it so in His word. In all its bearings, it is not only powerfully practical, but there is connected with it every thing kindly and generous—every thing calculated to melt into tenderness the obdurate human heart.

By the blessing of heaven, we shall endeavour to give Scriptural views of truth, stating it as God has stated it, and in the spirit which he has sanctioned; and, instead of stirring up hostility in those who differ from us, using every gentle means for gaining their confidence and affection; manifesting a love, not for victory, but for truth; and "made all things to all men," that we may, "by all means, save some."

Though firm believers in the necessity of Divine influences

for the smallest movement in the Christian life ; viewing faith, in common with all other graces, as the gift of God's spirit ; and looking on man as "dead in trespasses and sins," we shall yet exert ourselves, in God's strength, to prevent all perversion of such doctrines to the purposes of sloth, or of spreading a fatal inactivity over those powers of which we are still possessed. God forbid, that we should ever say to any poor sinner—sit still ; or that any representation of ours should lead him to suppose, that, if he is lost, the fault is with God. With our whole souls, we detest the cold and heartless antinomianism, which, while professing highly to honour the Gospel, stamps as legalism all warm, and fervent, and heart-stirring appeals for awakening sinners.

Without any fear of what judgment ignorance, or prejudice may pass, we will press home on the heart, with warmth and fervour, the motives which the Gospel furnishes, we will offer a free salvation to every one who hears it ; and the only reason for not enjoying its benefits which we will suffer any man to plead is, that he *will* not come unto Christ, that he may have life. We will excite the dead sinner to immediate activity ; and, in the voice of the omnipotent God, we will cry aloud to every miserable transgressor under the whole heaven, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

V. While thus we go forth, to free the world from the bondage of error and sin, by stamping God's truth upon hearts melted by love, we would not for a moment forget, that no great effect can be produced but by UNION. Individual human effort in the wide field of benevolent enterprise is, at best, but as "the small dust of the balance ;" before a united multitude, difficulties vanish. The little drop, unable to sustain its own weight, falls trembling from the blade of grass, and mingling with another drop, trickles down to unite with another and another still, till the little rill swells into a stream, which issues forth at length a majestic river, going to join its strength to the shoreless sea.

The CHRISTIAN FREEMAN will be the advocate of voluntary association, for speaking, in the language of words and of action, the truth in love. The life of every one of the Lord's freemen is, in truth, a life of voluntary action ; his conduct flows from principle, his obedience to God is cheerful, being dictated by love ; and being deeply convinced of the value of religion for himself, and for all whom he loves, he cheerfully contributes of his money, his time, and his exertions to benevo-

lent institutions, spreading wide and far the blessings of christian benevolence. He is anxious to encourage and assist all, however they may differ in opinion from him, in doing, even the smallest portion of good; and it is his desire to meet every man as a fellow-labourer, on a common ground, for a benevolent purpose, where he can meet him without sacrifice of principle. The Church of Christ, he knows to be itself a voluntary association, none being true members of it but such as have been drawn into it by cords of love; and in the history of Bible and missionary societies, and kindred institutions, he sees abundant evidence, that God commands his special blessing on union in a good cause, with the truth in love as the means of reformation.

Such union it shall be our constant aim to maintain and extend, believing it to be a great means of filling the earth with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. By contention and division among christians, the fair face of the christian church has been grievously deformed. It is our earnest desire to restore her to her original beauty; and by making the followers of Jesus again of one heart and of one mind, to restore to the church that moral force, by which, in days of primitive love, her victories were achieved; so that the bride, the Lamb's wife, may once more "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

While worldly friendships are breaking around us, and of those whom we loved most dearly, some have deserted us, and others sunk into the cold grave, it is our desire to establish, every where around, a union of hearts, never to be dissevered, which spending the morning of its youth amidst the imperfection of earth, shall flourish immortal in the perfection of heaven; and which, confined in time to comparatively a few, shall spread in eternity, through a multitude which, no man could number, of every kindred, and nation, and tongue, and people.

By such a union of sentiment and affection among those who fear God, the attention of the world will be attracted to the religion which they profess; those who cannot or who will not understand naked doctrine propounded, from the pulpit or the press, will be instructed by the practical language of truth and love; and when the ignorant wicked world see christianity clothed in her proper garments, and her heavenly principles held up before them, embodied in practical life, they will be enabled to form a proper judgment between the evil of error and the excellence of truth, the loveliness of virtue and the deformity

of vice; then they "shall return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not."

SKETCHES OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

No. I.—CHURCH OF ROME.

RECKONING from the year 606, when the Emperor Phocas constituted Boniface III. Universal Bishop, eleven centuries had passed over Romanism: the Reformation of the 16th century had shaken the system to its foundation; yet the opening of the 18th century beheld it flourishing in a green old age, exhibiting, indeed, many symptoms of decay, but none of immediate dissolution. The Reformed Churches enjoyed rest from persecution; but their success was greatly impeded by the decline of vital religion, and by internal dissensions. Protestants, instead of carrying on, with sustained union and vigour, the sacred warfare of truth and liberty against the Papal despotism, wasted their energies in party dissensions and wrathful controversies. Weary with the unhallowed work of blood, and more weary still from the effects of that mighty controversy which had, for a century and a half, employed them, the champions of Rome were glad to retire to a place of repose, beneath the shade, not indeed of victorious truth, but of superior power. Yet they reposed not in peace. The boasted unity of the Church of Rome is but a theological fiction. Intestine discords had been kindled towards the close of the preceding century, and the animosities of the contending parties grew daily more vehement. The Dominicans disputed with the Franciscans: the Jesuits with both; and the controversy relating to Jansenism was carried on, with great violence, throughout France and the Netherlands. The conflict between the two great rival orders, the Jesuits and Jansenists, was maintained, on both sides, with all the weapons which could be drawn from learning, power, and superstition. The Pope favoured the Jesuits, because the Jesuits, beyond every other order, had inculcated principles which bowed the human mind in lowliest prostration, before the ideal throne of ecclesiastical supremacy. The Jansenists of the united provinces, though professing warm attachment to the Church of Rome, resisted the authority of the Pope, and adhered to their order, in oppo-

sition to his exhortations and threatenings. The cause of the Jansenists had received powerful support from the annotations annexed, by Quesnel, to his French translation of the New Testament. Jealous of the success of this work, and of the popular favour into which it brought the doctrines of the Jansenists, the Jesuits prevailed on Louis XIV. to obtain a formal condemnation of the book from Clement XI. Accordingly, in the year 1713, in the bull called *Unigenitus*, Quesnel's New Testament was condemned, and an hundred and one propositions contained in it were pronounced heretical. By this procedure, Protestants saw that the court of Rome was obstinate in adherence to its corruptions. Multitudes of Roman Catholics were highly offended. A great commotion was excited throughout France. A large body of clergy and laity, with the Cardinal De Noailles at their head, made a noble stand in defence of the liberties of the Gallican church, and appealed, from the Pope's bull, to a general council. The issue of the contest was decidedly in favour of the Jesuits. Backed by the civil power, they persecuted their opponents with the most unrelenting severity. Some submitted from terror of penal law; others were deprived of their offices, and ruined in their fortunes.—Multitudes were forced to seek safety and subsistence in Protestant countries.

In opposing the Jesuits, the Jansenists had recourse to two weapons—the press and superstition. In their writings they were victorious; but employing the jugglery of pretended miracles, they exposed themselves, after enjoying a transient reputation, to detection and disgrace. To make it appear that they enjoyed the peculiar patronage of heaven, they prevailed on the multitude to believe that the relics of their departed champions were endowed with the power of healing the most inveterate diseases. The miracles pretended to have been wrought at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, in particular, filled all Europe with astonishment. Numbers announced themselves to be filled with the Holy Ghost, to be favoured with extraordinary visions and revelations, and by the prophecies and wild rhapsodies which they delivered, enflamed to madness the passions of the ignorant but admiring multitude. The civil power at length interfered, and suppressed the false miracles and fanatical tumults of the Jansenists.

The Jesuits, for the present victorious, in turn lost their influence, and became obnoxious to the displeasure of almost every government. Wherever they resided, they formed an "*imperium in imperio*,"—a government within a govern-

ment. They intrigued against the state—they stirred up dissension; and the morality which they taught tended to sap the foundation of civil liberty. The eyes of Europe were, at length, opened to their practices. In 1759 they were expelled Portugal; in 1763 they were expelled France; in 1766 they were banished from Bohemia and Denmark; in 1767 from Spain, Sicily, Venice, and Genoa; in the ensuing year from Naples, Malta and Parma; and in 1773 the society of these Jannissaries of Rome, was suppressed by the Pope himself. The order has again, however, been restored. The present policy of the Jesuits seems to be, not to storm, but to mine. They may intrigue for a time; but the wise will be taken in their own craftiness; Babylon is doomed, and neither policy nor power can save it from its fall.

Early in this century, much exertion was made by missions, chiefly under the direction of the Jesuits, for the conversion of the heathen to the Church of Rome. Their attention was particularly turned to the East Indies, the coast of Malabar, the kingdom of Tonquin, the Chinese empire, and the continent of America. Many converts were made, but christianity was accommodated to Pagan customs. It was no unusual thing with converts to practise their ancient superstitions, while professing to embrace the new religion. The policy of the Jesuits in propagating their religion in China, by indulging their proselytes in the observation of the rites of their ancestors, was so notorious, that, in 1704, Clement XI. issued an edict against this motley mixture of paganism and christianity; but, to appease the resentment of the Jesuits, it was considerably relaxed in 1721. In 1722, the Emperor of China banished the Roman Catholic missionaries from his dominions, and those of his subjects who refused to renounce christianity, were cast into prison, and had their properties confiscated.

The Pontiffs of this century, have, in comparison with their predecessors, been celebrated for talent and learning. Benedict XII. who died in 1730, exerted himself to reform many disorders in the church: and, though he held a council for this purpose, which met in the palace of the Lateran, in 1725, all his efforts were swept away by the tide of prevailing corruption. Benedict XIV. who died in 1758, attempted the same laudable object, but with no better success. This Pontiff was a distinguished literary character. Clement XIV., who died in 1775, excelled all his predecessors in liberality of sentiment, and tolerant treatment of separatists from the Romish communion.

During this century, the Papal authority appeared rapidly

on the decline. Princes no longer trembled at the thunders of the Vatican. France, Naples, Sardinia, set its decrees at defiance. The events of the French revolution in particular, gave an earthquake shock to Papal Babylon. The Bourbons were hurled from the throne. Napoleon Bonaparte usurped the supreme authority, and sweeping the continent in resistless conquest, the armies of the nations and the ghostly terror of Rome alike vanished before him. 1798 witnessed Pius VI. dethroned and in exile.

In enumerating the causes which contributed to the decline of the Pontifical authority, the torrent of infidelity which inundated the whole of Europe, demands a conspicuous place. Infidelity is the offspring of antichrist, and owes its origin to the disgust with which the prevailing corruptions of christianity had inspired men of thinking minds. Confounding christianity with its corruptions: mistaking the system of Rome for the religion of Christ, infidelity identified and assailed both.—Against the oppressions and absurdities of those forms of the Papal superstition to which the civil government had given its power in different countries, it waged exterminating warfare. Poetry, philosophy, and history; wit, learning, genius, were all pressed into the service of infidelity. She had her disciples and her apostles in universities, in cabinets, and in the church. Numbers of those who ministered at the altar, laughed in secret at the dogmas to which they made others bow. All ranks and classes caught the contagion. It became fashionable to deride religion. Many legislators were avowed deists. Schools were formed for educating youth in opposition to Christianity. Societies, called “*Illuminati*,” pervaded France, Italy, and Germany, for the avowed purpose of disseminating infidelity; and it was the boast of Voltaire, that he would make more disciples than Jesus Christ.

Infidelity seized upon a principle, great and glorious when properly understood and directed, namely, a fixed hostility to civil and ecclesiastical oppression. In connexion with this principle, so generally had infidelity been diffused on the continent, that it only wanted the impulse of external events, to shake the world and give rise to consequences which would be the amazement of after times. What it wanted it obtained. The success of America produced a powerful impression. In 1783, the independence of the United States was formally guaranteed by Britain. France assisted America; her scholars and her soldiers caught the flame of liberty from the infant republic: and, in 1789, that spirit broke out in the capital, and

spread itself over the kingdom, which terminated in the temporary overthrow of the Papal despotism and the Bourbon dynasty.

But France was morally unfit for freedom. No genuine liberty can exist, unless based upon religion and truth. Against religion true as well as false, infidelity warred with envenomed fury. Immorality followed in its train, and cruelty and blood marked its footsteps. From superstition France sprang to atheism; from atheism back to superstition. Panting for liberty she started from bondage to anarchy, and then exchanged the sanguinary horrors of anarchy for the splendid tyranny of a gigantic military despotism.

The fearful scenes of the revolution afford an awful proof of God's righteous retribution. Two centuries before, France had shed the blood of saints; infidelity now became the avenger, and "blood was given her to drink because she was worthy."

One might suppose, that the Church had learned wisdom, and reformed. But no! In 1798, five years after the revolution, in an assembly of ecclesiastical dignitaries at Paris, it was declared, that "they professed all the dogmas received by the Catholic Church, and condemned all the errors which she had proscribed." Consistently with her assertion of infallibility, she could change nothing, renounce nothing. And yet this obstinacy can only serve to precipitate her fall. "The lofty claims of infallibility," says Sir Walter Scott, "which she had set up and maintained during the middle ages—claims which she could neither renounce nor modify—now threatened, in more enlightened times, like battlements too heavy for the foundation, to be the means of ruining the edifice they were designed to defend."

BEDE.

SCRIPTURE EXPOSITIONS.

No. I.—GOOD WORKS.

"These things I will, that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works: These things are good and profitable unto men."—Titus iii. 8.

Good works, in a Scriptural and spiritual sense, are not antecedent to justification or regeneration, but consequent upon both. As good fruit is not the cause, but the produce of a

good tree—as healthy bodily actions are not the causes, but the effects of bodily health, in like manner, good works are not the cause, but the effect of a work of grace in the soul. Good works constitute a component part of present salvation. To teach, enforce, secure good works, is one end of the Christian ministry.

By what means is the minister to accomplish this object? Let the preacher, say some, urge the precepts of religion in preference to its doctrines; let him keep points of faith in the back ground, and dwell on practical morality. The text is pleaded in favour of this method; for can any thing, it may be said, be plainer than this, that the Apostle directs the minister “to affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works?”

The text, however, we conceive, teaches a very different mode of procedure. The inspired writer says, “*These things I will that thou affirm constantly.*” Now, to what things does he refer? Not to the things mentioned in the after part of the verse, as is commonly supposed, but to the doctrines which he states in the preceding context. These are, the degeneracy of our nature; the mercy and love of God, in originating a free salvation; the mediation of Christ; the regeneration of the Spirit; justification by grace; the hope of eternal life.—[Read the whole passage, ver. 3—7.]

What, then, is the preacher to affirm constantly? Is it the proposition, that those who believe in God may be careful to maintain good works? Though this interpretation pervades many a sermon, and many a citation of this passage, a reference to the original will shew that it is erroneous. The word rendered *that*, is *Hina* in the Greek, and signifies “*to the end that.*” The meaning, therefore, of the passage is, not that the preacher is to affirm constantly that believers should maintain good works—this, no doubt, is a great truth, but not the truth immediately taught here—but that he is to affirm constantly the leading truths of the Christian system, to *the intent*, that by these, as established means, “they who have believed in God *might* be careful to maintain good works.”

All profess to admit the necessity of good works. The question is, how are they to be produced? To this end the spirit of God wills and directs that the leading truths of the Gospel should be constantly preached. Are morals, it may be asked, not to be taught? Yes; but they are to be engrafted on Christian principles. The doctrines of the Gospel are to be taught first—first, not only in order of nature, but first in the

order of means. These means are established by God; they are wisely adapted to the end; they have an exquisite fitness and tendency to renew and regulate both heart and life; and, while it cannot reasonably be expected that God will give his blessing to means proudly and unbelievably substituted in their place, he has promised to accompany the means which he has himself appointed with the efficacious energy of his Spirit.

What tendency, it may be asked, has the doctrine of human depravity to promote holiness? It shews us the value of an atonement, the necessity of regeneration, the urgency of immediate repentance, and of bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. How does the doctrine of God's free mercy lead to active obedience? The exhibition of divine grace moves, and melts, and wins the heart—the affections are attracted—a reciprocating principle of divine love is begotten within—gratitude is awakened, and the soul is engaged in a course of willing and universal obedience. How does the doctrine of justification by faith alone lead to good works? Many say it leads to bad works. But the tendency of the doctrine is to good works—for when we are led to see that we cannot obtain pardon, or acceptance, or peace with God, on the ground of our own works, we fly to Christ, as set forth, obeying, suffering, and dying as our sacrifice and righteousness: believing on him, we see sin condemned by his cross, and we become crucified to it; we see the law not abolished, but maintained and magnified, and we obey it; faith works by love and purifies the heart; and while we are redeemed from perdition by Christ's atoning blood, the exhibition of that vital truth to the mind, accompanied by divine energy, has a moral influence in purifying us to himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

By the expression, "These are good and profitable unto men," are we to understand the doctrines of the gospel, or the good works produced by them? Some have thought the former; others the latter. Both views, however, may be justly and beautifully combined. *The doctrines of the gospel* "are good and profitable"—in the highest degree excellent and beneficial. What is the great appointed instrument for effecting the conversion and evangelical reformation of the world? The preaching of the doctrines of the cross. These have a peculiar power to arrest and awe, to melt and subdue the heart. They shed light on the mind, they pierce the conscience, they move the affections, they explode the cherished purposes of sin, they conduct the awakened soul to the mercy of God, the propitiation of Christ, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Let

those who have felt the saving power of these truths declare their excellence and utility. "I was once foolish and disobedient, (will many a christian say,) serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating; but it pleased God, by means of the law, to convince me of my sin and wretchedness, and by the truth of the gospel to reveal his Son in me as an all sufficient Saviour. I am now altered; a new heart is given me; I am now happy; I feel a divine peace within; my troubles are disengaging me from the world; my affections are in heaven; I desire to depart and to be with Christ."

The good works, the fruits and effects of these doctrines, "are good and profitable." They originate in good principles, they are actuated by good motives, they are performed to a good end. They glorify God, they are beneficial to ourselves and to others, to the church and to the world, to the bodies and the souls of men. They are fruits of the spirit; they are a part of salvation; they commend religion; they carry with them the testimony of a good conscience; they increase our happiness; they strengthen us in the divine life; they ripen us for heaven; they will be followed by an exceeding, and eternal weight of glory.

It is of great importance that we should have a correct view respecting the connexion that subsists between principle and practice, doctrine and duty, faith and works. There is no contradiction between them; but a beautiful order and harmony. Duty is not to be taught before doctrine, and right principles are to be laid down as the foundation of practice. As duty should follow doctrine, and practice principle, all doctrines and principles should be taught with the view, and as the means, of producing faith and good works. Works and faith, good works and good doctrines, bear the same relation to each other, as effects do to their causes. Let ministers, parents, and sabbath school teachers learn that, in training their respective charges, they should propose to themselves the end of leading them first to be "believers in God;" and, as the genuine result of this, "to be careful to maintain good works." Let them learn, that one great means which God has willed, and which he will bless in securing that object, is "affirming constantly" the truths of christianity. The means and the end are united in the divine arrangement; let them be united in a wise and prayerful, and zealous use of them on our part. Do any teach a mere systematic theology, without accompanying the truth with pointed addresses adapted to rouse the consciences, impress the

hearts, alarm the fears, or regulate the lives of men? They are wrong. Are there any who teach a mere system of morals, without a due regard to those doctrines which show the sinner the corruption of his nature, the blood of atonement, or the washing of regeneration? They are also wrong. Let both be united; God has joined them together; let them not be put asunder. Let us employ the means that he has appointed, and in the order which he has appointed; and as his blessing alone can give efficiency to the means, let his blessing be constantly sought.

As private christians, do we desire to be ready to all good works? As a means to this, let us meditate much on the fundamental doctrines of our holy religion. If ministers ought constantly to affirm them, we ought constantly to think on them. They are the appointed food of the soul. Let them dwell in us richly; they will quicken us to duty; they will inspire us with a holy love and pleasure in glorifying our God, and in benefitting our fellow-creatures and fellow-christians for Christ's sake.

Of what importance is it, that we should be careful to maintain good works, in order that we may exemplify and commend good principles? We profess great attachment to the doctrines of grace. They are much misunderstood and opposed; they are sealed with the blood of martyrs; they are bound up with our everlasting hopes. How are these doctrines to be most successfully upheld and diffused? By showing men that they are good and profitable. And how are men to be convinced that our doctrines are good and profitable? Most assuredly, by showing them our faith by our works, and letting them see and feel that our works "are good and profitable." By these, gainsayers are put to silence, obstinacy is subdued, and hostility conciliated; by these, religion is effectually commended, God eminently glorified, and ourselves, even more than our fellow-creatures, substantially benefitted.

CEPHAS.

NEGRO SLAVERY.

IN illustration of some of our references to Negro Slavery, we make the following extract from the Rev. Mr. Trew's Letters to the Duke of Wellington. Mr. Trew was an eye-witness to the horrors of Slavery:—

"He (a slave) may be flogged, how and when, and to what extent his master pleases; nor would his own evidence avail, though it were

ever so faithfully corroborated by his fellow servants, and they too of the most unblemished reputation, to convict, much less to punish, either the merciless hand that dealt the blow, or him by whose commands the limits of the law have been violated. Nor is this all. In the absence of his testimony, the slave is yet subject to another, and to a more grievous debasement. His wife may be wrested from his embraces by some savage sensualist to become the mistress of another; his child, yet preserved by a father or a mother's care, from the contamination of vice, may, for the same base design, be torn with violence from his roof; and the only friend, in the absence of all human consolation, to whom he can appeal for succour, is that Omniscient Being who, though clothed with the majesty of omnipotence, has yet an ear of pity open to the Negro's cry, and will hear and answer him. Can that system be right, my Lord, which opens an avenue to the perpetration of such appalling crimes, and such boundless abuses? Assuredly it cannot. But you will be told that cases of this kind are extreme, and rarely happen, and that in all matters affecting his real welfare, or the exercise of any abuse of power towards him, the slave has an appeal to the Council of Protection, and that by this lawfully constituted assembly his grievances will be faithfully adjudicated. But how can this be? The Council of Protection resists the evidence of the slave. Let them be men of the most undoubted honour, or possessed of the most melting benevolence, they cannot go beyond the prescribed boundaries of the law. They may hear his complaint, pity the remediless predicament of the unhappy sufferer—but the law has made him a slave, and the law rejects his testimony. But again, say some, this also is to suppose an extreme case, and one which is by no means of common occurrence. Will not the Negro *sometimes* be able to adduce other proof than his own? Some free person in the more humble walk of life, who may have been an eye witness to his sufferings, and in whose case there does not exist any moral disability to affect his testimony. In reply to this, it need only be observed, that whenever a man purposes being guilty of an abuse of power, he will carefully watch both his time and his opportunity for doing so.—He will take good heed to guard against any stretch of authority in the presence of those by whose evidence he can be made responsible for all his actions, to the laws of the land. To mention, however, a case in point. Pending the examination of witnesses, in a committee of the Jamaica house of Assembly, a few years ago, on the subject of Negro evidence, a question was put on oath, by the chairman, Mr. Reynolds, (one of the most indefatigable supporters of the Negro's claims,) to a reverend gentleman then under examination, to this effect—‘Have you ever known an instance in which the ends of public justice have been defeated through the inadmissibility of Negro evidence?’ The answer was—‘I have.’ The individual was then called upon to state the particulars of it; which he did, nearly as follows—‘In the parish where I reside, the following case was lately brought before the Council of Protection, and came under my own immediate observation. A white man, the owner of a small plantation, sought to seduce from the path of virtue a young woman of colour, *the natural child of his own father, but a slave*. The girl, taught by her mother (who had been instructed by the missionaries in the fundamental truths of religion) the sinfulness of an act which would be rendered doubly heinous by the relative situation of the parties, refused to listen to his solicitations. The monster, (for the

name of a man can hardly be assigned to him) placed the girl in the stocks, and renewed his entreaties. This, however, produced no other effect on the mind of the unhappy female, than to induce her more strenuously than ever, to resist his importunities. At last, as a dernier resort, flogging was had recourse to, and the poor prisoner was most unmercifully punished. But every artifice that villany could contrive, or lust invent, was in vain. Virtue triumphed over vice, and the poor girl was finally released from her confinement. On regaining her liberty, the first use she made of it was to apply to a magistrate; who, shocked at the cruelty of the treatment she had received, and to his own credit, summoned a Council of Protection forthwith to hear her story. It was simple, and well authenticated; but, *it was the story of a slave*. Gladly would the Council of Protection have punished the monster; for the members of it were fully persuaded of the truth of the girl's statements; but the law forbade them: and thus, not only was justice impeded, but guilt of the most appalling and aggravated character suffered to escape. 'What terms, my Lord, are sufficiently strong to mark the detestation of every rational man to a case like this, to which it were impossible to find a parallel, but in the annals of slavery. And yet this part of the evidence, taken before the Committee of the Jamaica Assembly, does not appear on the face of their printed minutes; and on enquiring why it was not reported, I am informed that a discussion arose in the committee, as to the propriety of expunging this part of the evidence; and that it was expunged from the minutes accordingly—a member at the same time observing, 'Are we not cutting a rod to break our own heads.' Thus, through the inadmissibility of slave evidence, may the most abandoned and profligate acts be perpetrated with impunity, against the person of the slave, by any free man; and though it were even carried to the very utmost limits of human barbarity, and though death itself were to be the issue of the event, still the culprit is accountable to no earthly tribunal, though the act were verified by the oath of one hundred slaves.'

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

As christian men, we feel a lively interest in the cause of Missions, and, as christian journalists, we shall be their strenuous and untiring advocates. Did we conceive it possible that any would require an apology for the determination we have formed, to devote a portion of our pages to the advocacy of this cause, we could easily discover one, which, by every christian mind, would be deemed satisfactory. We could find it in the feelings which christianity awakens in the mind, when engaged in the contemplation of human misery—in a consideration of the mass of ignorance, error, and sin, which hangs, like an avalanche, over all the nations that "know not God;" and, in the moral dignity of the enterprise, the accomplishment of which involves, not only the removal of that ignorance, error, and sin, but also the introduction into every nation, of peace,

and righteousness, and holy joy. We will not seek an apology—the cause deserves, demands our best energies. It is identified with the ultimate end of all providential arrangements—with the design of EMMANUEL in his sufferings and death—with the best interests of the human race—with the instruction of Seraphim and Cherubim, in the deep, deep mysteries of redeeming love—and with the manifesation, through all worlds, of the grace and glory of God!

We rejoice, that in the advocacy of this cause we have many able and devoted allies; and, still more, that by a numerous class of the community its fundamental principles are so fully recognised, and its claims so fully acknowledged, as to leave for us only the pleasing task of directing them to a proper channel, through which the streams of their benevolence may flow for “the healing of the nations.” While, however, we cordially rejoice in the recent revival of a Missionary spirit in the Churches, and in the happy consequences of that revival, in the moral amelioration of the world, we are convinced that much remains to be done. We have long been convinced, and we cannot conceal our conviction, that many who engage in the support and advocacy of Missions, do not fully enter into the “essentials” of the question. They exhibit it as *merely* a “work of faith, and labour of love”—as an enterprise, in which it is *pleasant* to engage, but from which it is not *sinful* to refrain. Our remark is intended to apply to the press. “We think,” with a reviewer in the *Congregational Magazine*, “that the press owes to the religious public, and the world, a class of publications, which shall open more fully and clearly to the view, the comprehensive and immutable principles of missionary obligation, and exhibit their connexion with every part of the christian economy, and all the vital elements of the spiritual life.”

Cherishing these feelings of the importance of the cause—of the inefficient mode in which it is sometimes advocated, and of those views of its sacred claims which it is necessary to exhibit, we will endeavour, by our humble advocacy, to accomplish, in our pages, that which others have left undone.

We will endeavour to persuade our readers, that while they view the missionary enterprise as pre-eminently a work of kindness and of love, they should ever associate with this idea of benevolence, a feeling of debt, and of claim, and of positive obligation—we will solemnly remind them, that of their time, and property, and influence, they are not the absolute proprietors, but merely the responsible stewards—we will tell them of

the important relation in which they stand to the various branches of the human family, and of the sacred obligations which are involved in that relation—we will show them, that the possession, by any individual of our race, of the heavenly treasure revealed in the Gospel, constitutes that person a positive debtor, not only to God, but to man, and that he is, consequently, bound to employ every means, and embrace every opportunity of directing *all* men to that treasure, by telling of its fulness, as sufficient for all, and by informing them of the freeness with which it is dispensed. Our unceasing effort will be, to strengthen where it exists, and to produce where it exists not, a *missionary spirit*—to call forth the energies of those sections of the Church Universal, with which we are more immediately connected, and by showing to ALL, that they are not more sacredly bound to love GOD, their Maker, than they are to love their fellow-men, and to prove how they love them, by using means for their spiritual amelioration—to call forth the “sacramental host of God’s elect” to look in compassion on this dark and ruined world; and, beholding its miseries, to pray and labour—to labour and pray, that the desert may rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

Such are our convictions of the solemn, the lasting, the untransferable obligations, under which the CHURCH is laid, as the ordained evangelist of the world, to send “the Gospel to every creature under Heaven;” and our best energies shall be employed in the work of persuading her to act worthy of a destination so high and so hallowed!

For this purpose, in occasional papers, we shall trace the missionary enterprise from its origin—explaining the nature, and exhibiting the extent of the unostentatious, yet eminently successful labours, of christian missionaries, in the apostolic age. We shall notice the subsequent decline of the missionary spirit, tracing the causes which unhappily produced it; and, while investigating the recent revival of missionary zeal, we shall explain the principles, and describe the operations of those benevolent institutions, in which, with all their imperfections, we recognise so much of Britain’s glory, and of Britain’s hope.

CONGREGATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS.

SABBATH SCHOOLS, PRAYER MEETINGS, BIBLE CLASSES,
SACRED MUSIC.

AT one time, many worthy persons opposed Sabbath-Schools, under the impression, that these institutions were inconsistent with the sacredness of the sabbath. That impression has gradually given way. It seems to be now generally admitted that Sabbath-School instruction is a good work; and it may be justified against all cavilling, by that declaration of our Lord, when he vindicated himself against the Pharisees who reproached him for healing on the Sabbath—"Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath-days."

As long, however, as prejudice and difference of opinion existed, Christian congregations were prevented from establishing Sabbath-Schools in their official and corporate capacity. Much apathy also prevailed. The plan for communicating religious instruction by means of Sabbath-Schools, was carried into effect by the association of energetic individuals belonging to different congregations and different denominations. The system was brought to bear on the mind of the youth of the kingdom at large, by means of a grand national society. Far be it from us to wish to see "the Sunday-School Society for Ireland," superseded or crippled in its exertions, but it is high time that the Church at large, as such, should come forward to patronize and work this great moral engine of Sabbath-School instruction, as one means of national regeneration. Let the Church of Christ, therefore, in every congregation, immediately establish a Sabbath-School. Let the pastor, elders, and principal members, take the oversight. Let active, well-informed, religious young persons, of both sexes, be encouraged to offer themselves as teachers. Let the surrounding neighbourhood be visited, and parents invited to send their children. In this way, Sabbath-School instruction will be established on a more permanent basis, and security afforded that it shall be of a strictly scriptural character. In this way the things that pertain to salvation, will find their way into many a heart, and many a home, doubly darkened by worldly poverty and religious destitution. The church will rejoice over many, as her spiritual children, who must have else run wild and loose as moral nuisances upon the world.

Much improvement has of late been introduced into Sabbath-School instruction, by means of "the Lesson System." A

passage of Scripture is read by the children, and the catechetical mode of instruction is applied to its elucidation. Questions are so shaped as to be adapted to the capacities of the children; and it is a particular point, that their judgments should be called into exercise no less than their memories. They are made as much as possible their own instructors. Nothing is passed over; every word is explained; doctrinal lessons are deduced; practical application is made; the children are enabled to give, in their own words, an account of what they read; and not merely is an intellectual, but a devotional air thrown over the whole.

Let ministers make themselves acquainted with the improved method; let them form a class for the purpose of training the teachers; and let the machinery of a Sabbath-School be connected with every congregation. Under the Divine blessing much good will be done; and assuredly, on the principle, that "the liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself," the good done will not be least to those who are diligent in this labour of love.

PRAYER MEETINGS.—Meetings for social prayer and religious conversation, are excellent institutions. Though still observed in many congregations, they once prevailed more than they do at present. Let them be revived, and made universal; let one, under proper regulations, be established in each district. That such institutions have sometimes been abused, to the fostering of spiritual pride and a disputatious temper, may be admitted, though we have never witnessed such effects in our own experience: still, however, when observed by christians, for the purpose of helping one another to understand the Scriptures, and to save each other's souls, they cannot fail to be highly beneficial. And, then, prayer! Is this a time when prayer should be restrained, when christians should be discouraged from uniting together to supplicate a revival of the work of God among us? Remember the promise,—Mat. xviii. 19—"Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them, of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

BIBLE CLASSES.—The young must always be peculiar objects of pastoral care; they are the hope of the Church; and experience shews, that the greater number of those who are religious, have been trained in the ways of religion from their childhood. While ministers should constantly enforce the

duty of parental instruction, they should follow this up themselves, by devoting particular seasons to the religious education of the young. The ancient plan of stated district catechising, and of visitation from house to house, we wish to see carried on with vigour. But in addition to this, we conceive, that Bible Classes for the special instruction of the young, might be established with admirable effect. Let the minister set apart an evening in the week for the purpose of meeting such of the young of his charge as can be induced to attend. The following is the plan by which a Bible Class has been conducted with the best effects. A chapter or portion of a chapter, in regular order, is read from the old testament, and the same from the new. On this the children are examined, verse by verse. Familiar and affectionate conversations are held with them on the subjects that arise, and they are encouraged to express, in their own language, the meaning of what they read. When the chapter is finished, the more advanced pupils are invited to give a short account of the substance of what has passed under review. One or two questions are then repeated from the shorter catechism, and these are broken down into a great variety of questions, which serve to open the minds and awaken the thinking faculties of the children. Proofs from Scripture are also called for. Each day a verse is committed to memory at home, by the pupils, according to the plan of the "British Verse Association;" and at the class they repeat to each other the verses which they have committed to memory through the week. The class is commenced and concluded with a brief prayer.

SACRED MUSIC.—With prayer meetings, and Bible Classes for the young, Church music might be connected with much advantage. Nothing is more delightful than sacred music. It awakens devotion and warms the heart. Means should be taken by Christians, throughout the North for diffusing among the people, and especially among the young, a taste for psalmody. Candidates for the ministry should be called on, as one branch of their education, to pay particular attention to acquire the skill and power of conducting, in the best manner, the exercise of social and of public praise. And now that the practice of *drinking* is so extensively banished from our evening parties, why should we not sanctify and endear our social intercourse by "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs?"—Col. iii. 16. By reviving a taste for sacred music among us, foolish songs, and stories, and jesting would be banished; the mind would be stored with sacred poetry; the songs of

Zion would mingle with our thoughts, and become associated with our daily occupations; they would lighten our labour and cheer us in our sorrows; moroseness and gloom would be dispelled, like the evil spirit of Saul at the sound of the harp of David; party bitterness would be softened down; the tempers of Christians sweetened; a higher tone given to piety; devotional feelings awakened to more lively exercise; and the public worship of the Church rendered more attractive, edifying, and delightful. That we may not be accused of going too far, we fortify ourselves with the authority of Luther, who was a great advocate for the application of music to the service of religion, and who highly excelled and delighted in it himself; the hundredth Psalm tune being of his composition. In one of his epistles he thus writes, "Beyond doubt the seeds of many virtues are in the minds of those who are influenced by music. I do not hesitate to say, that music is next to divinity; since, after theology, it imparts what otherwise religion only can impart, a quiet and happy frame of mind; a manifest proof that Satan, the author of cares and perturbations, flies at the sound of harmony, even as he flies at the suggestions of religion. Hence we find, that the prophets practised no art so much as music; so that they considered theology and music most closely united, while they set forth the truth in psalms and spiritual songs."

ECCLESIASTES.

REVIEW.

Discourses on the Sabbath. By Ralph Wardlaw, D. D.
Glasgow. pp. 295. 12mo.

WE rejoice that the attention of the Churches in the sister island has been directed, in a very decided manner, to the subject of Sabbath sanctification. Our readers will feel at no loss to ascertain the cause of a simultaneous movement, in England and Scotland, for the purpose of securing the same grand object. The Lord's day is profaned in both these countries, as it is at home, though in Scotland the profanation has not been carried to the same extent. When our Saviour sojourned on earth, the house of God had become a house of merchandize; and now the day of God seems to have become a day of merchandize; and, what is still worse, with many it is a day of drunkenness, and of the sin of every name

to which drunkenness usually leads. Such flagrant transgressions of the divine law had been long witnessed, with sorrow, by Christian ministers and people, and some exertions were made to stem the tide of ungodliness. At present, however, the necessity for exertion has become more urgent; and, accordingly, our neighbours have taken up the subject, in the determined spirit of enlightened Christian zeal—a spirit which, under the blessing of God, must triumph.

Where any sin extensively prevails, its influence is felt far beyond the sphere of its direct operation; the standard of Christian morality is lowered; and even good men do not, with holy boldness, oppose the march of iniquity. Laxity of practice begets laxity of principle. Sabbath profanation, by one class of the community, occasions the less strict observance of the day by another; and, as human nature is ever willing to defend what it has once adopted, the next step consists in questioning, or denying altogether, the obligation of Christians to keep one day in seven holy to the Lord. That there is no direct scriptural authority for observing the first day of the week, has been contended by Christian writers of considerable merit, and whose opinions, on other subjects, are entitled to deference. For the sanction of God's word some have substituted the authority and practice of the Church. To us the subject appears in a very different light.

The Lord's day is either of human, or of divine institution. If it be human, we should reject it, as inconsistent with our Christian liberty, and as an unhallowed attempt of man, to bind on our necks a yoke, which is not the yoke of Jesus. If, on the other hand, it is divine, and of this there is the most satisfactory evidence, we promptly acknowledge the obligation; and we call on Christians, of every name, to unite in rescuing from the grasp of mercenary avarice, and from cursing and blasphemy, and nameless desecration, the day of our Saviour's resurrection from the dead.

It is well observed, in the volume before us, that "it would be preposterous to go at once into the consideration of the *mode* of observing the day, till we have satisfactorily ascertained the scriptural authority for observing it at all." The account of the primitive institution of the Sabbath, as a day for commemorating the displays of God's power and wisdom, in the works of creation, is found in Gen. ii. 3—"And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." On this text our author argues, in the most luminous and convinc-

ing manner, that if language have any meaning, the seventh day was set apart from the creation of the world, for the public and private exercises of divine worship. The same idea receives ample confirmation from the nature of the case. If the glory of creative power were to be commemorated at all, what more fitting period for instituting the commemoration, than that in which "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" Was it necessary that such an ordinance should be perpetuated, in order that man, in the calm of holy contemplation, might survey with reverence, the magnitude, variety, and excellence of Jehovah's works; it was still more necessary that the institution for accomplishing these objects should obtain from the moment in which "the heavens and the earth were finished." Viewed in this light, the Sabbath was, from the beginning of time, clearly indicative of the benevolence of God, as it afforded to his intelligent creation, an opportunity of forming exalted conceptions of the divine character, and of indulging the richest feelings of the human heart. But it is asserted by those who will allow the Sabbath no earlier origin than the Mosaic economy, that had it existed from Adam, the divine records must have noticed it, during the age of the patriarchs. Admitting it to be a remarkable fact, that the early part of sacred history is so silent on the subject, we yet strongly deny the validity of the objection. We know, and even those opposed to our view must acknowledge, that the institution of the Sabbath existed as a distinct ordinance, subsequently to the transaction at Sinai; yet several hundred years will be found to have elapsed after this admitted religious institution of the seventh day, without the slightest allusion to it in the sacred books; or, to adopt the statements of Doctor Warllaw—"No mention of it, nor any allusion to it, occurs in the books of Joshua and Judges, any more than in that of Genesis: and the argument might be strengthened from the extremely rare and incidental notice of the day, for even a greater number of centuries thereafter. The silence, therefore, of the narrative is not, in either case, admissible as proof of the non-existence of the institution; the correspondence in this respect, of the history which follows the giving of the law with that which precedes it, neutralizing entirely the force of the objection."

If, then, it is an established fact, and we cannot see any ground for reasonable doubt, that, so soon as God had finished the work of creation, he instituted the Sabbath, and left it as a day of memorial to all generations, some very interesting and important conclusions will follow. The law of the Sabbath, for

instance, being a primitive law of the world, can never be regarded as exclusively Jewish ; but is binding on all the nations of the earth. The obligation, too, is perpetual. We trace the original ground of it in the finished work of creation. If you inquire whether the obligation have ceased, we demand of you, in return, has creation passed away ? Before you, are the works of Jehovah ; and their silent but powerful eloquence calls on you to "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."—Even now is the command strong as in the days of old, when it filled with rapture the soul of primitive innocence ; or went forth amid the darkness and thunderings and lightnings of Sinai, to compel the obedience of a stiff-necked and rebellious people. When shall it lose its power ? Not until the heavens pass away, and the elements melt with fervent heat ; and the earth, with the works thereof, is burnt up.

Were it granted that the fourth commandment is merely a positive precept ;* involving in its nature nothing moral, and deriving "its importance alone, from the will of a superior," the preceding remarks would still show that we are not released from the obligation to obedience. That it combines what is positive with what is moral, we are fully convinced ; and the following extract will exhibit the coincidence between our sentiments, and those of Dr. Wardlaw :—

"It seems to me, I confess, a very strange thing, that, because this command prescribes the proportions of time which are to be devoted to secular and to spiritual concerns, to the labours of the present world, and to the service of God and preparation for the world to come,—it is therefore, entitled to rank only with positive enactments. Is there nothing moral in the use of time ? And can there be nothing moral in a precept that regulates its distribution ? Is not time, on the contrary, one of those gifts which we are most in danger of undervaluing, and consequently of squandering and abusing ? And are we not, from the earthly tendencies of our nature, in especial danger of appropriating it entirely to worldly occupations and ends ? And would not this be most immoral, and most injurious ? However little thought of, time, which is a species of universal property, is in reality more precious than any other. According as it is neglected and abused on the one hand, or employed and improved on the other, will it be productive of a corresponding amount of evil or of good,—of glory or of dishonour to God, of benefit or of injury to man. It is the first thing for which we have

* "Under the name of positive institutions, we comprehend all those impositions and restraints, which, not being suggested to any man by his conscience, and having no necessary and natural connexion with the dictates of that internal monitor, seem to have no importance but what they derive from the will of a superior who prescribes them."—Horsley, *Sermon xxi.*—Note to page 76.

to account. The responsibility attaches to every hour. Every moment, as it flies along, bears with it to the judgment-seat a charge of evil, or a testimony of good. There is no one thing of more serious consequence than the *moral use of time*,—the application of moral principle to its occupation. And if the Divine Legislator has laid down a general rule for its distribution,—a rule inclusive of our twofold interests, for time and for eternity, can there be any rule which has a clearer title to a place in the moral law? As a precept that merely distinguishes one day from another, it has the aspect of a positive institute:—but as a precept fixing the great general principle for the use of time, and directly designed for the very highest moral and spiritual purposes, it must be assigned to a different class.”

To the *rest* of the Sabbath all men, and with them, the beasts of the field, possess a claim, with which it is dangerous to meddle. On this point we have great pleasure in presenting an extract, which will be read with interest:—

“ This day of rest, then, belongs to every man, by the law of God. It is property,—property to which there is a divinely guaranteed title. No one man has a right to demand it of another. To exact labour on the day of rest, is as felonious a trespass against the law of God, as the abstraction, whether furtive or violent, of another man’s worldly substance. The fourth commandment secures property in time, as really as the eighth commandment secures property in money or lands. The rest of the seventh day is the birth-right possession of every human being. God has given it; and man may not take it away. When masters of servants, and owners of slaves, speak of *allowing* their servants and their slaves the Sunday to themselves, they speak the language of presumption. They cannot allow what they have no title to withhold. The time is not theirs. It belongs, by divine, and therefore inalienable prescription, to their dependants.”

We now come to consider the scriptural authority for changing the sabbatical institution from the seventh to the first day of the week. On this point, the volume before us will be found worthy of a careful perusal. The author first states very clearly and succinctly the argument drawn from the example of primitive christianity, as recorded in the New Testament. On the first day of the week the disciples met together. This was the season for worshipping God in their religious assemblies; and their conduct received the high sanction of the King of Zion. The work of salvation finished—the Saviour arisen from the dead, redemption becomes the leading subject of the christian’s commemoration. Inspired apostles have taught him that the day of Christ’s resurrection is the Lord’s day, and that it is to be set apart to his service. He discovers, too, that, though some change has taken place, there still “remaineth,” under the new economy, “a rest (or the keeping of a Sabbath) to the people of God.”—Heb. iv. 9. If any of our readers entertain doubts respecting the application

of this text, we beg to direct them to Dr. Wardlaw's book, for ample information.

In allusion to the change of the day generally, and the devotional feelings which the observance of it should associate in the mind of the Christian worshipper, we subjoin the following statements:—

“The divine excellence of the work of Christ, and the surpassing preciousness of the blessings of his salvation, are such, that they must not hold the place of a merely subordinate, secondary, additional reason for the celebration of the Sabbath. They must have the first place. First in the divine estimate of excellence and glory, they must be first in man's grateful and reverential commemoration. How, then, shall their superior importance be marked in the celebration? Why, in order to give them the lead, the day shall be changed. Creation had the day formerly; redemption shall have it now. Not, in either case, exclusively. The sabbatical commemoration of creation would necessarily, from the time of the fall and the first promise, be associated, in the minds of devout believing worshippers, with the anticipation of the promised redemption; and the Creator be worshipped as the God of salvation. And in like manner, on the Christian Sabbath, the God of grace, the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is worshipped, not to the exclusion of his creative power, and majesty, and goodness, although with special reference to his redeeming mercy. Redemption only takes the lead, as it is so pre-eminently entitled to do among the subjects of celebration; and in this way, the change of the day no more alters the nature of the duty, than if redemption had only been introduced as an additional reason, and the former day had been retained. The change of the day does not essentially change the thing.”

Doctor Wardlaw's work consists of NINE discourses, FOUR of which are devoted to the discussion of “*the obligation* to observe the Sabbath as a permanent divine institution, together with the change of the day under the New Testament dispensation;” the remaining FIVE embrace “the practical department.” We warmly recommend the work to the Christian public.—The general reader will derive from it much interesting instruction—it will awaken and direct the zeal of the devoted servant of Jesus, and lead him to put an estimate higher than ever on the importance of Sabbath sanctification. The reasonings on the *origin* and *change* of the day, will be found especially deserving the attention of the Christian student; as they will help to arm him against the attacks of infidelity on the one hand, and on the other, will teach him to oppose the dastardly surrenders made by nominal Christianity.

We cannot conclude this article without referring to the “Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the observance of the Lord's day.” Having been appointed, at a late period of the last session, the Committee have not yet extended their inquiries to Ireland; nor are their labours at all

completed as regards England and Scotland. So far, however, as the investigation has proceeded, "the evidence exhibits a systematic and widely spread violation of the Lord's day, which, in the judgment of the Committee, cannot fail to be highly injurious to the best interests of the people, and which is calculated to bring down upon the country the divine displeasure." The report contains much valuable information, and claims the attention of the politician and the philanthropist. But we address ourselves to the Churches, and we ask them, is there not subject of grave reflection furnished by the sentiment which we have quoted from the Committee's report? "A systematic and widely-spread violation of the Lord's day" in a christian land, among a christian population!! Well, indeed, may the report speak of "the Divine displeasure."—Our national sins are numerous; and it is not the least of them, nor the least aggravated, that we have *not* remembered "the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Let the churches be aroused to a sense of their duty; let there be joint prayer to Almighty God for the quickening influence of his Spirit; let our pulpits furnish lucid statements of the obligation we are under to set apart the first day of the week to the service of God; let earnest appeals be made to the heart and conscience; let the power of Christian example go forth in the name of the Lord of the Sabbath; and the day which is holy and honorable, freed from profanation, will be devoted to holy pursuits, and will extend, far and wide, its unnumbered blessings. D.

BIBLE SOCIETY ANECDOTES.

Dr. Claudius Buchanan obtained from the Jews, in the interior of India, a very singular copy of the translation of the New Testament into Hebrew, made in the sixteenth century. The translator was a learned Rabbi, and the translation, in general, is faithful. The design of the translator was to make an accurate version of the New Testament, for the express purpose of *confuting* it, and of repelling the arguments of his neighbours, the Syrian or St. Thome Christians. "But behold the providence of God! the translator became himself a convert to Christianity: his own work subdued his unbelief; and he lived and died in the faith of Christ." This manuscript is now in the public library at Cambridge.

As the interesting case of Lord Littleton, and his friend, Mr. West, are to the same point, it may not, perhaps, be improper to introduce here the account of these eminent men, who, from being obstinate opposers, became willing advocates of the truth. It is thus given by the Rev. Mr. Biddulph, in his *Essays on the Liturgy*:—

"The effect which was wrought on the mind of the celebrated Gilbert West, by that particular evidence of our Lord's resurrection which was afforded to his Apostles, was very remarkable. He, and his friend

Lord Littleton, both men of acknowledged talents, had imbibed the principles of infidelity, from a superficial view of the Scriptures. Fully persuaded that the Bible was an imposture, they were determined to expose the cheat. Mr. West chose the Resurrection of Christ, and Lord Littleton the Conversion of St. Paul, for the subject of hostile criticism. Both sat down to their respective tasks, full of prejudice, and a contempt for Christianity. The result of their separate attempts was truly extraordinary—they were both converted by their endeavours to overthrow the truth of Christianity. They came together, not as they expected, to exult over an imposture exposed to ridicule, but to lament their own folly, and to felicitate each other on their joint conviction that the Bible is the Word of God. And their inquiries have furnished two most valuable treatises in favour of revelation; one entitled, ‘Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul,’ and the other, ‘Observations on the Resurrection of Christ.’”

Two ladies, as collectors to the Bible Association, called upon a shopkeeper for his weekly subscription of a penny. After he had given it, he told them the following circumstance, which occurred to his daughter, who, at that moment, lay dangerously ill. The last time she was in the shop, it happened that a hand-bill of the last Anniversary Meeting of the Society lay upon the counter, when a gentleman's servant, who was a professed Deist, came in, and said “Why do you have such stuff as this?” My child, continued the shopkeeper, who is only eleven years old, said to him, “May I ask if you ever read the Bible?” “No,” said he. “I thought so,” she replied. A considerable time afterwards, on the ladies calling again at the house, they were informed that the little girl was dead. The afflicted father told them, that before she died, she one day called him, and said, “Father, I have a favour to ask of you. Pray give me 8s. 6d. to buy a Bible for that servant; perhaps when he knows it is my dying request, he will read it.” It was accordingly procured and given him. Four or five months afterwards, this same man came to my shop and asked, “Can you tell me where I can get two Bibles? For nine years,” said he, “through reading Tom Paine's works, I was an infidel, and tried all I could to corrupt my fellow-servants; but now, I see my folly, and am resolved to do all I can to make amends by giving them the Bible.”

SYSTEMATIC MONTHLY DISTRIBUTION OF TRACTS.

MOTIVES are not wanting in favour of the system of monthly distribution of tracts, which are drawn from the very genius of the Gospel, and from the prominent principles of action which characterize the era of Christian benevolence in which we live. What one principle more distinctly characterizes this era, than that Christians are beginning to view the Gospel, not as a blessing to be treasured up and enjoyed by themselves alone, or merely to be preserved, where others who feel its importance may come and share its blessings; but which is to be **CARRIED AND TENDERED** to every individual of all our race, who must be saved through the Redemption it makes known, or sink into perdition. On this principle is based the effort that is making, or should be made, to place the Holy Scriptures in every family; to send forth the living Teacher to proclaim to all the tidings of the Gospel; to gather all

the young into Sabbath and Infant Schools; and in every way to communicate to all the knowledge of Him, whom to know "is life eternal."

The adaptation of Tracts to *arrest the attention* needs no evidence; and in the *successive* distributions, at monthly intervals, as a token of friendship and affection to every family, they can scarcely fail of being regarded with more than common interest.

The presence of an affectionate devoted Tract Distributor, each month, in every family, is strikingly calculated to disarm the bitterness of prejudice against the Gospel; and the opportunity afforded for personal religious conversation, as the circumstances of each family permit, and thus of carrying the Gospel to the fireside, not only in the pages of the Tract, but from lips on which the dew of love to Christ and the souls of men has fallen, is one which can be perhaps in no other way so favourably and so frequently obtained.

The spiritual wants of the people among whom they dwell are thus brought distinctly to the knowledge of active Christians, to engage their prayers and their labours of love in every manner which the Providence of God shall suggest. If families do not attend public worship, their feet are directed to the house of God. If their children do not enjoy the benefit of the Sabbath-School, they are directed thither. If they have not the Bible, efforts are made to supply them, and induce them diligently to search its sacred pages. If the widow and the orphan are suffering, their wants are seen, and the same benevolence which prompts a regard to the soul, will excite a sympathy not unavailing for the distresses of the body.—*Fifth Report of the American Tract Society.*

RULES FOR READING THE SCRIPTURES.

NEVER open the Word of God, without remembering that you must be tried by it at the judgment seat of Christ.

Read, with prayer for direction, to the right meaning; with earnest attention to the words, and connection of the passage; with diligent comparison of every passage with the whole Bible; and with "patient thought" concerning the result.

When you read the Scriptures, let not your attachment to the systems or the sentiments of men obscure their meaning, or induce you to pervert them.

When you discover any truth in the Bible, receive it with candour, maintain it with meekness, and avow it with courage.

When you discover any duty in the Bible, meet the discovery with a cheerful obedience.

In your daily perusal of the Sacred Volume, receive its doctrines with a lively faith, practise its duties with a holy boldness, and pray for divine grace, by which these doctrines and these duties may become the fountain and the streams of genuine Christian discipleship.

This Book contains the law of the Most High God. It founds its claim to this divine origin on the harmony of its facts with the records of universal history; on the moral character of its inspired penmen; on the sublime yet simple majesty of its style; on the excellence of its doctrines; on the purity of its morals; on the rapidity with which

its truths were originally promulgated, under circumstances the most unpromising; and on the evidence of indisputable miracles.

To the Christian this volume supplies a surer guide than the Israelites enjoyed in the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night. It unfolds the consoling doctrine, and the directing precept; the warning threat and the cheering promise; it exposes our guilt, proclaims our danger, and reveals our duty; it condemns to justify, and justifies to condemn no more.

To the dead it speaks life, and to the living it unfolds immortality. It makes the weak strong, and to the strong it increaseth strength—it invites inquiry, and amply rewards the honest inquirer; it holds up a guiding star through the pilgrimage of life, and extends the horizon of our moral existence into the boundless ocean of a happy eternity.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

By Thomas Pringle, Esq. New-York.

“To whom shall we go?”—JOHN vi. 68.

To whom shall we go, Lord, for light and for life,
 ‘Mid the darkness and dangers that threaten us here?
 Oh! where shall the heart find repose from the strife
 That preys on our peace, and o’erwhelms us with fear.

Shall we go to the world, with its honours and wealth,
 So forward to promise—so faithless to pay?
 Its claims and its cares rob the soul of its health—
 It “leads to bewilder”—it lures to betray.

Shall we go to gay pleasure, and bow at her shrine,
 With the millions who worship, enslaved by her spell?
 To the chambers of death soon her votaries decline—
 Soon the steps of her victims take hold upon hell.

Shall we go to the law? It speaks peace to the pure,
 Who never have done, nor inclined to do, wrong:
 But we have transgressed, and we cannot endure
 The wrath and the curse to the law that belong.

To whom shall we go, but to thee, gracious Lord?
 Thy life-giving words carry hope to the heart;
 Thy pity and pardon, great Saviour, afford;
 And never—oh! never—from thee may we part.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

Letters to a Daughter, on Practical Subjects. By William B. Sprague, D. D. (of Albany, United States of America,) pp. 248. 18mo. Price 3s.

THIS is a reprint, by the London Religious Tract Society, of a very delightful and interesting little volume. It is neatly done up in silk, with gilt edges. The author has entered with spirit into the subject of female education, in all its branches, with the view of form-

ing female character, not only for time, but for eternity. The work throughout is distinguished for good sense, and exhibits much sound and accurate observation. We especially recommend it to our female readers.

Memoirs of the Life and Ministry of the late Rev. Thomas Spence of Liverpool. By Thomas Raffles, D.D. LL.D. pp. 376. 24mo. Seventh Edition. Price 4s.

THESE Memoirs are rich in entertainment for the lovers of Christian biography. The subject of them, at an early period of life, determined to devote himself to God in the ministry of the Gospel. Steady to his purpose, he surmounted many difficulties, and was, at length, appointed pastor of a large and respectable congregation at Liverpool. He enjoyed unprecedented popularity; but the season of his labours was short. Finding that sea-bathing was beneficial to his health, he generally took that exercise on Mondays. On 5th August 1811, he met a watery grave. He had just repeated the first verse of Cowper's admirable hymn—

“God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm.”

A Memoir of Miss Mary Jane Graham, late of Stoke Kenning, Devon. By the Rev. Charles Bridges, M.A. pp. 317. 12mo. Price 5s. 6d.

Mr. Bridges is advantageously known to the Christian public as the author of “*the Christian Ministry*,” “*an Exposition of the 119th Psalm*,” &c. &c. The true Christian, of whatever denomination, will not fail to appreciate his writings: they are so plain, and so practical, and they breathe so much of the genuine spirit of the Gospel. The present memoir is of the same complexion, and possesses at least equal interest. Miss M. J. Graham was a person of high cultivated mind, and one who from childhood knew the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus. “At the age of seven,” says her biographer, “she had acquired habits of secret prayer, a favourable mark of Divine influence upon her soul.” Her life exhibits considerable variety of incident, mainly connected with Christian experience. She was born in the April of 1803; and in December, 1830, “without a sigh or struggle, she entered into her eternal rest.” The work has just appeared, and it cannot be too highly recommended.

SELECT LIST.

Memoir of the Rev. Levi Parsons, first Missionary to Palestine from the United States. 18mo. 3s.

Letters on Frequent Communion. By the Rev. John Mason. A. M. New-York. 18mo. 1s. 6d.

History and Character of American Revivals of Religion. By the Rev. Calvin Colton, A. M. of America. Second Edition. 12mo. 5s.

A Funeral Sermon on William McGavin, Esq. By the Rev. Greville Ewing. 12mo. 1s.

Christian Characteristics; or, an attempt to delineate the most prominent features of the Christian Character. 18mo. 2s.